

Carroll, Rhonda

From: David.brensilver <david.brensilver@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 24, 2016 12:09 AM
To: JudTestimony
Subject: Desmond's Law/HB 5344

Dear Judiciary Committee members,

I'm writing to you with regard to HB 5344, the bill known as "Desmond's Law."

I am among the many Connecticut residents who remains appalled and outraged that Desmond's murderer, Branford resident Alex Wullaert, was sentenced in 2013 to participate in a psychiatric-rehabilitation program and not to the serious prison time he deserves for strangling Desmond to death.

Wullaert had previously assaulted (strangled, though not fatally) his girlfriend and walked away a free man after that violent episode, too.

That animals deserve advocates to ensure that their interests are served in court proceedings is--or should be--without question.

If I have a concern about HB 5344, it's that it isn't specific enough with regard to who would serve as an animal's advocate in court proceedings.

HB 4355 indicates that Connecticut's agriculture commissioner would maintain a list of potential animal advocates (law students, lawyers, and veterinarians) to represent animals' interests in court proceedings.

If we're going to enact legislation designed to protect animals, *we should make every effort to lean on those whom we can trust to vigorously advocate on behalf of animals and their interests.*

In a recent letter to Rep. Diana Urban, I suggested that the Darien, Connecticut-based nonprofit organization Friends of Animals, which has an unparalleled track record when it comes to legal and legislative animal advocacy in this state and beyond, be consulted with regard to what the agriculture commissioner's list of potential animal advocates would look like and how "Desmond's Law" would be implemented.

Animals deserve every bit of protection that we do. Sadly--and infuriatingly--in our society, they don't receive a fraction of the consideration they deserve as the individuals they inarguably are. And that sickens me to no end.

I urge you to favorably report 5344 out of your committee as a baseline piece of legislation that can be strengthened to ensure that animals' interests--and not ours--are served.

Respectfully,
David Brensilver
Waterford, Connecticut